

John 9:1–12

- ¹ Now as Jesus passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth.
- ² And His disciples asked Him, saying, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”
- ³ Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him.
- ⁴ I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work.
- ⁵ As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”
- ⁶ When He had said these things, He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva; and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay.
- ⁷ And He said to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which is translated, Sent). So he went and washed, and came back seeing.
- ⁸ Therefore the neighbors and those who previously had seen that he was blind said, “Is not this he who sat and begged?”
- ⁹ Some said, “This is he.” Others said, “He is like him.” He said, “I am he.”
- ¹⁰ Therefore they said to him, “How were your eyes opened?”
- ¹¹ He answered and said, “A Man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, ‘Go to the pool of Siloam and wash.’ So I went and washed, and I received sight.”
- ¹² Then they said to him, “Where is He?” He said, “I do not know.”

“As Jesus Passed By” John 9:1-12

INTRO:

One of the vivid memories of my childhood was when we visited a place where a tornado had passed by. There were large trees twisted up by their roots and tossed aside like match sticks. Entire houses reduced to splinters, furniture strewn about the neighborhoods, and once treasured possessions now useless junk. No one who saw the scene doubted a tornado had passed by. I always think of that scene when I read the first words of **John 9**. ***“As [Jesus] passed by, he saw a man blind from birth.”*** Like the tornado of my childhood, when Jesus passes by a life, no one can doubt that He has been there.

Our text today is the account of a life which was transformed because one day Jesus passed by. The man in our story was born blind. He had never seen the light of day, enjoyed the breathtaking beauty of a summer sunset, or seen the hues of a rainbow. But when Jesus came by everything changed. We will look at it in terms of three divisions.

- I. The Reason for the Miracle (v. 1-5)***
- II. The Method of the Miracle (v. 6-7)***
- III. The Response to the Miracle (v. 8-10)***

I. The Reason for the Miracle (v. 1-5)

A. *“As [Jesus] passed by, he saw a man blind from birth.”*

The two central people in this chapter are the man born blind and the Lord Jesus Christ.

B. Meeting this man provokes a very important question in the disciples minds.

“His disciples asked Him, ‘Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?’”

Although this question involved this man in particular, it touches on an issue with much broader implications. In short, the disciples asked, *“Lord, is it true that sickness is directly related to sin?”*

1. Some prominent Rabbis of that time were saying that sickness and sin were directly connected. Rabbi Ammi wrote, *“There is no death without sin and no sickness without iniquity.”* The Old Testament did make a connection between sickness in general and sin, and it did teach that sometimes specific sickness can be God’s judgment upon a specific sin. It never said all illness was always the result of an unconfessed sin in the life. This is where Job’s “friends” erred in their thinking. They reasoned a person going through great suffering is a person who has committed a great sin.

2. The fact is all people struggle with sickness because we are all sinners. We cannot look at someone who has illness and assume that they are great sinners. For example, we know the Apostle Paul, who was not a great sinner, suffered with a chronic physical affliction for a large portion of his life. In **2 Corinthians 12:7-8** we read,

“To keep me from being too elated by the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from being too elated. Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness.’”

We can also talk about Epaphroditus, who was sick and almost died. We read about him in **Philippians 2:25-27**.

“I have thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need, for he has been longing for you all and has been distressed because you heard that he was ill. Indeed he was ill, near to death. But God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.”

There is no indication at all that Epaphroditus was a great sinner and that is why he was ill.

C. Jesus clearly answered the disciples’ question and gave them and us a principle that can comfort us in times of illness and difficulty. **(v. 3)**

“Jesus answered, ‘It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.’”

He was not born blind as a result of some terrible sin. He was born blind because God desires to make His works known in him. He was born blind that God might glorify Himself through this man.

1. We can see this clearly in the life of this man. Momentarily, the Lord Jesus will heal him and cause quite a stir in his neighborhood. But does this principle apply to more than just this man?

2. Yes. Remember a Judean king named Asa in **2 Chronicles 16**? Asa trusted the LORD in the past and He gave him a tremendous victory. However, one day, the King of Israel to the north came down and fortified the cities on the border of Judah. This was an act of war. What did Asa do? Did he pray to the LORD? Nope, he took the silver and

gold from the temple and sent it to the king of Syria to entice him to attack Israel. After all of this God sent a prophet to Asa with a message.

“The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him. In this you have done foolishly; therefore, from now on you shall have wars.”

Asa, God sent you this trial so He might have opportunity to glorify Himself in you. You blew it!

3. God sometimes allows trials and difficulties to push their way into our lives like He did in Asa’s life and in this blind man’s life in order that He might have opportunity to glorify Himself through us. So, when trouble comes, let us seek the Lord even before we seek the solution!

II. The Method of the Miracle (v. 6-7)

A. Having understood the reason for the miracle, let us rush on to the method Jesus employed to perform this miracle. Our Lord used different methods to heal people. He did not do all of them the same way. For example, in the case of the blind men in **Matthew 9:28-29**, Jesus simply touched their eyes and they were healed. In another case, the woman with the issue of blood was healed by touching the hem of His garment. The nobleman’s son in **John 4** was healed from a distance through the Lord just saying it would be so. The Lord did it this way so we would not mistakenly think that the power was in the method and not in the Master!

B. When Jesus healed this blind man, He didn’t just touch Him. Instead, He made clay out of His own spittle and put it on the man’s eyes and sent him on a journey to the pool of Siloam to wash the mud off.

“Having said these things, [Jesus] spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then He anointed the man’s eyes with the mud and said to him, ‘Go, wash in the pool of Siloam’ (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing.”

That must have been a fairly long journey for a blind man to wind his way through the city, feeling his way along, until he got to the pool. Why did Jesus do this?

1. This probably was to serve as an illustration to us of how we are saved. We see here the sovereign part of our salvation in that Jesus did the healing. The man’s trip to the pool of Siloam and the washing away of the mud did not heal him. The Lord Jesus did the healing. It was all of grace!

2. Consider also the human responsibility side of this miracle. What if the man had not done what he was told to do? What if he had said, *“Hey, quit putting mud in my eyes. Didn’t your mommy tell you that this is unsanitary?”* If he had then brushed it away, would he have been healed? Or what if he had washed in a pool closer by, would God have done the miracle? No. The man born blind had to believe. He had to obey in order to receive the blessing. This is our part in salvation. We must believe. God does not believe for us.

C. The man who went stumbling and feeling his way slowly to the pool of Siloam, came back from that pool seeing! I think he probably took the scenic route back to the old neighborhood.

1. He saw the sun for the very first time. He saw colors, flowers, children, and other people for the very first time!
2. When he got back to the neighborhood, the people didn't just sort of notice that he could see. He probably grabbed them and turned them around and said, "*Hey! Hey! Did you notice? The sky is blue and the trees are green and flowers are beautiful!*"
3. I think of the phone calls that I used to get from people who were newly saved. "*Pastor, Pastor, did you know that the Bible says this! Is that really true Pastor? Does God really say that?*" Eyes that once were blind suddenly can see! It is a miracle. Never forget it!

III. The Response to the Miracle (v. 8-10)

A. We have looked at the reason for the miracle. Jesus healed this man born blind so that the works of God might be made manifest in him. We have also explored the method that Jesus employed in doing the miracle. Now for the next few moments let's look at the response to the miracle.

1. When the man arrived back at his old neighborhood the response to this miracle was shocking. The neighbors and the ones who saw him begging and who probably had put money in his cup are all astonished. (v. 8-9)
2. This can't be the same guy, can it? A major debate rages through the bamboo telegraph. Some said, "*Yep, this is Joe, I would know him anywhere.*" Others said, "*Oh no, this is just a guy that looks like Joe!*" But the man kept saying, "*I am he. It really is me!*" The people who knew the man best couldn't believe the physical change which happened in his life because Jesus passed by.

B. Immediately, they began asking the obvious question and got the play-by-play answer. (vs. 10-12) But they were wise enough to know it wasn't the method that produced the miracle. They wanted to see the person who did this!

1. I hope we are wise enough to see when someone is truly saved, that it is not the method which produced the miracle. It is the Lord of glory. When we show people the gospel, and the Lord saves them, people who see it don't want to really know how it was done. Rather, they should want to meet the One who did the miracle!
2. Repentance, prayer, and faith did not convert us and "*deliver us from the power of darkness and convey us into the kingdom of the Son of His love.*" Colossians 1:13. This is just the means that our Lord chose to use, but Jesus did it all. And when He has done it, like the tornado in my childhood, there is abundant evidence that Jesus passed by in the life, a life falling apart, but a life being put back together by the Lord of Glory!

Has Jesus passed by in your life?

Hymn #516 He's Everything to Me